Death of whale

42. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a dead whale with injury marks was found on Orissa coast on 20th December, 2005;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have been able to establish causes of its death and identify those responsible for its death;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken to prevent recurrence of such incident?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, it is a fact that a dead Minkey whale was found on 19th November, 2005, floating in the shallow coastal waters near the sea shore off the Kantiakhai Forest block on the northern border of the Bhitarkanika National Park. The body was badly putrefied, but no injury marks on the body have been reported. The dead whale measured 24' long and 14' mid-girth.

(c) and (d) As reported by the State Government of Orissa, the death of the whale may have occurred in deep seas, after which the carcass was washed to the shore. The carcass was lying in a remote and inaccessible spot due to which the post-mortem could not be performed. Hence it has not been possible to ascertain the cause of death as well as to identify those responsible for the death.

(e) The different species of whales have been included in Schedules I & II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 thereby according highest degree of protection against hunting and trade. Awareness programmes have also been taken up by the States to increase awareness about conservation of this species. India is also a signatory to the International Whaling Commission pledging support for protection of whales globally.

Loss of forest cover, mangroves and wetlands

43. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the final technical report of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan has been indicated that India has lost over 50% of its forest cover, 40% of its mangroves and a significant part of its wetlands;

(b) what are the major recommendations made in the Report for securing India's future;

(c) whether Government have started working on the recommendations made in the above Report;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) to (e) The technical report of the "National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP)" was prepared under a project funded by the United Nations Development Programme — Global Environment Facility. The report contains compilation of inputs from various stakeholders on conservation of biodiversity, its sustainable use and equity in various aspects relating to conservation and use. The document is compilation of 71 reports prepared at local, state, eco-regional and thematic level. The report did indicate that the forest cover in the country and areas under mangroves and wetlands have reduced. However, there were large number of discrepancies and inconsistencies in the report. Hence, pursuant to the completion of the project tenure and submission of the draft report, a "Group of Experts" was constituted by the Ministry of Environment & Forests to scrutinize the draft Report and rectify the discrepancies and inconsistencies. The report has since been corrected by the "Group of Experts". This corrected and revised report is going to act as an input for the draft National Action Plan (NAP) which is to be prepared, harmonizing it with the provisions of the draft Environment Policy of the Ministry.

Cleaning of Yamuna river

†44. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the rivers whose cleanliness model has been studied by the group of experts for cleaning of Yamuna;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.